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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the development of infant schools, day nurseries, kindergarten, nursery schools, and Head Start, and discusses the implications of these services for present-day policy. The philosophy and pedagogy of infant schools, their origins, and their development in North America, are described. Also discussed are the origins of day nurseries and the influence of social work on day nurseries. The religious background of the kindergarten movement, the growth of kindergarten in the United States, and the transition of kindergarten into the public schools, are discussed. The origins and development of nursery schools are traced, and their theoretical foundations are considered. The historical background of Head Start, the goals of the program, its methods of implementation, and the impact of evaluative research on its development, are considered. The paper concludes that while an emphasis on the common goals of all provisions for preschool children may ease the formulation of social policy, due consideration should be given to the unique contributions of each. An extensive list of references is included. (BC)

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A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

Rena Shimoni

April, 1990

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INTRODUCTION

The care and education of preschool children in America has become a pressing social policy issue (Lubeck & Garrett, 1988; Willer, 1987; Morgan, 1989). While most European countries have nearly reached the goal of providing universal child care and education (Kammerman, 1989), Americans are still struggling to agree on what the goals of child care and education policy should be. The system of child care and education in the United states is fragmented, inconsistent, and in a state of chaos (Morgan, 1983). Amongst those who favor more comprehensive child care policies, there is a lack of agreement concerning the nature of future policy (Morgan, 1989). Central questions being debated at present concern the extent of public funding for child care and education; the auspices of early childhood programs, the training requirements of staff, and the appropriate curriculum for young children.

Policy makers have been advised to learn from history (Schlossman, 1976). A historical review of the development of services for the care and education of young children may help understand why policies for child care and education today are in their present state of confusion (Grubb,1987). Beyond that, a perspective on the past provides an awareness of the many possibilities for care and education of children, and a "firmer sense of the reasons for emphasizing

some possibilities and ignoring others" (Weber, 1984). The predecessors of present frameworks for young children, the infant school, the day nurseries, the kindergarten, nursery schools and Head Start, all developed as separate movements, with unique goals, administrative structures, and pedagogies. Today, there is a growing trend to minimize the differences between these frameworks and to stress the need for a unified approach. Terms such as early childhood educator have supplanted titles such as nursery school teacher, kindergarten teacher, or day care worker. While this trend may facilitate the development of comprehensive policy, the uniqueness of each service may get lost along the way. An understanding of the history of the development of the above provisions may help to ensure that the unique contribution of each provision can be maintained. It might also indicate patterns or trends that policy makers may wish to avoid. With this view in mind, this paper will review the development of the infant schools, the day nurseries, the kindergarten, nursery schools and Head Start. Implications for present day policy, particularly in reference to the central issues of current debate, will be discussed.

THE INFANT SCHOOLS

Although the infant schools were a very short lived phenomenon in North America, their historical importance has been stressed (Greenblatt, 1977; Pence, 1988; May & Vinovskis, 1977; Spodek et al, 1987). They are said to have been a paradigm of an innovative and multifaceted program. The practical needs of the community for child care, social reform, and revolutionary educational practices were all encompassed in the infant schools (Bradburn, 1966; Pence, 1988; Greenblatt, 1977). Infant schools originated in Great Britain. . The founder, Robert Owen, was a philosopher, industrialist and social reformer (Strickland,1982) who believed that society may be totally transformed through the process of education. Essential to his utopian vision of total reorganization of society was the view that education begins in infancy, and that the community should provide schooling for children from early infancy. While this may have been motivated partly by a need for the employment of mothers of young children , descriptions of Owen's school portray more than custodial care.

The goals,philosophy and pedagogy of the infant school

Owen's first infant school, established in New Lanark in 1819, was called the Institution for the Formation of

Character. Turner (1970) describes the implementation of Owen's "radical approach" to education as follows:

> His teachers had a novel attitude of kindliness to their pupils, so that education was a source of pleasure and amusement. The infant schools placed a new emphasis on social elements such as learning to live in...harmony. Competition was to be eliminated...with no rewards and punishments. There was less stress on reading and writing and more on music and dancing. The physical layout of his school was equally revolutionary, with an emphasis on spacious airy rooms. Playgrounds were introduced for the first time. Galleries, pictures, models and simple apparatus were found inside these rooms. (p. 153)

Although the focus of discussion in this paper is on developments occuring in the United states, it may be of importance to note two points made by historians on development of the infant schools in Britain. Much credit for the maintenance and growth of the infant school system is given to Samuel Wilderspin, who had been trained by Owen (Turner ,1970 ; McCann, 1966).

McCann's (1966) review of Wilderspin's work and Turner's ((1970) review of the infant school system have highlighted the gap between theory and practice that existed in many infant schools. Owen's original intention was to provide infants with pleasurable experiences which would excite the children's spirit of enquiry and foster their natural curiosity. However, under Wilderspin's influence many of the early infant schools "deteriorated into mere rote-learning and marching displays" (Turner,1970). Perhaps this occurred as a result of Wilderspin's attempt to make Owen's rather philosophical pedagogy more concrete, to facilitate its

dissemination and replication. Wilderspin himself is said to have blamed the deterioration into rote learning and drills on the lack of properly trained teachers (McCann, 1966). Lacking the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings, untrained teachers might have grasped the more concrete "recipes" from the curriculum and used them indiscriminately.

Infant schools in North America

Robert Owen visted America in 1824 and "sparked a wave of enthusiasm for the idea of founding utopian communities" (Strickland, 1982). Although his attempt to establish such an experiment in New Harmony, Indiana, was shortlived, the idea of the infant school caught on. By 1825 infant schools had been established in North America, spreading to "every major city on the Atlantic seabord (Pence, 1990).

Although the original goals of the infant schools were related to the children of the poor, the aims and objectives of infant schools in North America were varied, and extended across class boundaries. As summarized by Pence (1986):

> infant schools were seen by one group or another as variously: a positive influence on the poor and wayward; a prep school for the disadvantaged; a blessing for the working class; a charitable undertaking of the wealthy; an experiment in learning.

As the goals of the North American infant schools varied, so too did the educational philosophies on which they were founded. Some seemed to base their pedagogy on a

romantically inspired humanistic approach associated with Owen, while others focused more on early instruction and rote learning that came to be associated with Wilderspin's schools. However, the infant school movement in North America was extremely short lived. They had virtually disappeared by 1840.

The historic importance of the infant school movement can be viewed from two perspectives. First, they can be considered a model of a service designed to meet the needs of society at large, employers, employed parents, and the educational needs of children. Pence (1990) has argued that identification with the infant school as part of day care history could be a source of pride to early childhood professionals. Another historical perspective would look at the reasons behind the downfall of the infant schools, and several have been proposed in the historical reviews. Amongst the reasons cited are the changing economic conditions and the waves of immigration that limited the need for women in the labor market. Parallel to economic conditions was the advance of the Victorian ideal of motherhood and "fireside education".

An important consideration is put forth by May and Vinovskis (1977). When the philanthropic backbone of the infant schools shifted towards the idea that infants are better off being educated at home, infant schools had to be maintained through the public school system. This shift then precipitated the need for accountability within the

school system. Leaders of the movement felt "impelled to show quick dramatic results" in academic or intellectual achievement. This emphasis on academic achievement was initially helpful in gaining the support of the school system, but it later became one of the reasons for the decline of the infant schools. Premature intellectual precocity was blamed for the imbalanced personalities of infant school children. Members of the school system, according to May and Vinovskis (1977) welcomed the decline of enthusiasm for infant schools. Teachers found the free explorations of the infant school children intolerable, and discipline problems abounded. Perhaps most importantly, the infant schools were expensive to maintain. The decline of the infant schools was thus not opposed within the school system.

Lessons from the history of the infant schools

Several issues can be highlighted from this overview of the rise and fall of the infant school movement. The originators of the infant school had a vision of providing a service that coincided with their philosophical view of childhood. Yet the curriculum that evolved, with its stress on rote learning and academic achievement was not congruent with the philosophy. It is difficult to implement a curriculum that is true to an idealistic vision of children. With the the rise of the mothercare ethic and the reduced need for women in the labour market, the infant schools lost

their support. Educational programs for young children are vulnerable to both changing economic conditions and prevalent social norms. The view that women should be at home with their children has influenced public support of provisions for young children since the decline of the infant schools. Finally, it can be noted that the infant schools' absorption into the school system resulted in new requirements and expectations. By adapting itself to fit an existing organizational structure (and thus receive funding) the infant school lost much of its original philosophy and intention.

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THE DAY NURSERIES.

The evolution of the day nurseries in the mid nineteenth century shared some common themes with the infant schools that preceded them. Backed by philanthropists, the day nurseries' primary goal was to provide day care for neglected children of the poor. However, one major component of the infant school movement seems to have evaded the day nurseries. Day nurseries were, by and large, unconcerned with educational philosophy or methodology. They were a protective, custodial service supported by philanthropic endeavours, and later through social service agencies. Although for brief periods in their history, educators were visible in day nurseries, this has not been a dominant theme in their development.

The origins of the day nurseries

According to Greenblatt (1977) ladies from the affluent classes , in "the spirit of charitable voluntarism" organized the first day nurseries. The need for day care services was created by the disruption of what most Americans considered normal family life (O'Brien Steinfels, 1973), caused by industrialization, urbanization and immigration. Child neglect, whether stemming from widow-hood, separation, divorce, disability or unemployment, became a primary concern of philanthropists. New medical discoveries had illuminated the importance of sanitation and health, and a connection was established between maternal

employment and infant mortality (Fein & Clarke-Stewart, 1973). The major concern of the day nursery, then, became the child's physical well being, with an additional emphasis on "proper habits, orderliness, and manners".

The goals and "pedagogy" of the day nurseries

Descriptions of most day nurseries are fairly bleak (Goldsmith, 1972; Vandebelt Schultz, 1978; National Association of Day Nurseries, 1940). Descriptions are common of bleak rooms, absence of playthings, and overworked matrons, responsible for the cooking, laundry and cleaning, as well as minding the children (Goldsmith, 1972; Fein & Clarke-Stewart, 1973; Clarke-Stewart, 1982). Not much is known about methods of child management, but one nursery's report of tickets being given for punctuality, good behaviour and the proper performance of duties being redeemable by articles of clothing (National Association of Day Nurseries, 1940). While the creators of the infant school talked about the revolutionary vision for children, the day nursery was seen as "an excellent opportunity of becoming fitted for servants or future housekeepers" (NADN, 1940).

The day nurseries of the mid nineteenth century have been criticized as being exploiting in nature. Many of the mothers of nursery children worked as domestics in the homes of the patrons. Day nurseries have also been described as a provision made necessary by the exploitation of immigrant

women in the "sweat" shops (Fein & Clarke-Stewart, 1973). However, day nurseries can also be seen as a well meaning attempt to meet an urgent social need. The philanthropic attitude that supported the nurseries in the early stages seemed to be based on an assumption that child neglect is the result of a "brutal system", of long working hours and inhuman conditions (O'Brien Steinfels, 1973). The parents were not considered bad, just in need of help. This attitude was to change as the day nurseries moved into the second stage of their evolution, when social workers replaced the philanthropic ladies as key players in the running of the day nurseries.

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The social work influence on day nurseries

The end of the nineteenth century saw a dissillusionment with the day nurseries. There was mounting concern about undermining parental responsibility for child-rearing. Admission criteria were formulated to determine that only women who would be destitute without the service would be admitted. In 1911 the first state widow's pension act was created in Illinois. ~~was legislated which was~~ designed to provide public assistance, and thus alleviate the need to work outside the home. In many states this aid extended to wives of permanently incapacitated, insane, or imprisoned men (Greenblatt, 1977). The predominant social policy thus became to provide assistance for mothers to stay at home.

While the philanthropic auspices of day nurseries continued into the 1920's, social welfare workers became the predominant force in these services. O'Brien Steinfels (1973) quotes a 1919 address at a National Conference of Social Workers as exemplary of the attitude of social workers towards day care clients. The care of children is necessary, it was reported, when there is some maladjustment in families. Day care was a "temporary expedient", necessary until family life could be reconstructed and the mother restored to her rightful place at home (O'Brien Steinfels, 1973). Being poor was no longer sufficient for receiving day nursery provision. One had to be pathological as well. This view of day care persisted for several decades. The

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Child Welfare League of America in 1960 distinguished day care from educational programs as a service offering:

> care and protection of children. The purpose, the reasons for which a child and family may need it, and the responsibility shared with parents distinguish day care...from educational programs. (Child Welfare League of America, quoted in Caldwell, 1971).

The social work influence on day care is often blamed for the stigma from which it still suffers today. It should be remembered, however, that the social workers were expressing views that were widely held by society, and which were reinforced by behavioral scientists. That is, a normal family consists of a father at work, and a mother staying home with her children. Nevertheless, educationalists reviewing the history of day care seldom highlight the positive aspects provided by that service. Melby's (1942) review of case work service in a day nursery reveals a commitment to the provision of emotional support for the family, and a deep concern for the possible effects of the separation of a young child from his family while in day care. Regarding an application to day care as merely a "presenting problem" for underlying family problems can be interpreted as an intrusion of family privacy. Yet, childrearing in the context of the isolated nuclear family is a well documented difficulty (Bronfenbrenner,1971). A social work orientation to day dare might have resulted in a heightened awareness of this issue. Furthermore, the concern for the emotional well being of very young children, particularly in light of the problem of separation, is one

that educationalists tend to ignore. Yet, many prominent psychologists (Pringle, 1975 ; Brazelton, 1981) have expressed deep concern regarding this matter. While the possible adverse effect of day care on the emotional development of young children is no longer considered a popular area of research, this issue is far from being resolved.

The legacy of the day nurseries

The history of day nurseries as reviewed here suggests that the auspices had a major impact on the nature of the program. Concern for the physical well being of the child in the early day nurseries was later combined with the case work focus of social work. The stigma resulting from the case work approach to day care is still evident today, even though this approach may have been beneficial to the families involved. The social work domination of day care has been assoicated with the general lack of educationally appropriate programs . With the exception of brief periods of national emergencies, when government funding encouraged the entry of nursery school teachers into day care [1], day care remained a custodial service until very recently. The lack of educational goals in day care programs is associated with the minimal training requirements for day care staff, that is presently considered detrimental to the provision of quality programs.

1. The Works Project Administration and the Lanham Act, that were enacted during the depression years and World War II , are described in a subsequent section.

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THE KINDERGARTEN MOVEMENT

In one sense the kindergarten movement can be viewed as the most successful stream in the history of early childhood programs. Founded by educated women, termed "a ...band of evangelical enthusiasts" who were committed to educating young children (Lazerson, 1972), the kindergartens have come closer to a universal provision than any other program for preschool children. However, some of the very factors that contributed to the success of the kindergarten movement can be related to the problems facing kindergartens today.

Background and ideology of the kindergarten movement.

May and Vinovskis (1977) assert that the philsophical underpinnings of the kindergarten and the infant school were not very different, yet the former flourished while the latter disappeared. While the infant school's originator could be decribed as a secular social reformist, the kindergarten philosphy was based on a deep religious conviction. Froebel, the originator of kindergarten philosophy, viewed life as a unity between God, man, and nature. Children, innately good, needed to be provided with the materials that would draw upon their inner needs, and with teachers "possessing the qualities of warmth and tenderness which made them appropriate mother supplements" (Lazerson,1972).

Children under the age of three were not admitted to kindergartens, and most children attended only part time. The "loving mother" retained her position as the most important influence on a child's development (Snyder, 1972). The early kindergartens were defined as "an idealized environment, an extension of domestic nurture or of the culture of the middle class parlor, which was helping to produce moral, autonomous, human beings (Finkelstein,1988). Lazerson (1971) quotes a speaker at a national meeting of kindergarten teachers who declared that the mother is a handmaid of the lord, the kindergartener a fellow worker in the garden of the lord.

The religious overtones of the kindergarten movement, combined with the rhetorical appeal to the virtues of motherhood may, indeed, have been a factor in their widespread acceptance within a variety of institutions and philanthropic agencies in their early years. Unlike the experience of day nurseries and the infant schools, no vocal opposition to the existence of kindergartens has been recorded in the many historical reviews of the movement.

The founders of the kindergarten movement in the United States.

In Dauntless Women in Childhood Education (1972), the life stories of the founders of the kindergarten movement are described. Margarethe Schurz, Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, Susan Blow , Alice Temple, and others are described as

outstanding women who managed to combine a quest for learning and teaching with a commitment to the betterment of the lives of children. Inspired by the religious-philosphical writings of Froebel, the pioneers of the kindergarten movement established model programs, solicited funds, disseminated the kindergarten philosophy through lectures, books, and articles. They created model kindergarten programs and set up a variety of training institutions for kindergarten teachers. As stated by Finkelstein (1988), in the first 70 years of the kindergarten's development, its leaders began to cultivate specialized knowledge, to claim moral and cultural authority, to prepare experts, and to set up training schools. Indeed, 19th century kindergarteners began the work of building a profession.

The pedagogy of the kindergarten movement.

The pedagogy of the kindergarten movement has undergone many changes since its Froebellian origins. As mentioned previously, Froebel's kindergarten was based on a vision of an underlying oneness linking man, nature and God. On the basis of this idea of the unity of all living things, childhood was conceived of as a respected unit of the divine whole. The teacher, then, was to strike a balance between providing the child with the freedom required to grow on his own, while imparting the skills, knowledge and values which allow him to become a productive member of the larger whole

(Braun & Edwards, 1972). By leading the child through experiences that were organized and articulated in the curriculum, the child would be ensured exposure to pleasurable experiences that would instruct him. Committed to play as a mode of instruction and a curriculum representative of the larger society, Froebel designed "gifts" to be manipulated by the child in order to lead him to an orderly sense of reality. These included soft colored balls, cubes, cylinders and spheres, all to be presented to the children in a prescribed order. Froebel also developed "occupations" which included prescriptions for working with clay, string beads, sewing and weaving.

While the first kindergartens in the United States attempted to replicate Froebel's work , it was Alice Temple and Patty Hill Smith that were instrumental in breaking away from the strictly Froebellian pedagogy (Snyder, 1972). The "gifts" as geometric symbols were considered to be incomprehensible to the young child, and beyond its capability to manipulate (Lazerson,1972; Vandewalker, 1971). Influenced by Dewey, the emphasis of kindergarten curriculum shifted from symbolic activity to activities of immediate interest to the child. The Froebellian pedagogy was gradually superceded by other goals, such as the fostering of cooperation and learning to solve problems. New play materials were introduced, that are "open ended" and thus could be used by the children in ways that challenge their creativity. By 1920, the reform of the kindergarten was

essentially complete. In the reform of the kindergarten, the underlying belief in childhood as a special time, unsuitable for formal academic training, did not change.

Read and Patterson (1980) trace the influence of behavioural theory, Gesell's views of maturation, and the psychoanalytic movement (in the 1920s, 30s and 40s, repectively) on the kindergarten movement. While many teachers were able to adapt the curriculum to incorporate the theories, Spodek and Robinson (1965) point out that it may have led to a degree of confusion as to what are the appropriate practices of teachers.

The auspices and target population of the kindergarten movement.

The first kindergartens in the United States catered to the affluent and cultured, but, according to Lazerson (1971) they received their most important support as an "institution for the urban slum". Sponsored by philanthropists, they were a mixture of frameworks for socialization to middle-class norms and for broader social reform. Parent education was an essential component of the kindergarten program. Teachers would be in the kindergartens during the mornings and visit the homes in the afternoon.

In the early 1900's kindergartens began the transition from philanthropy to the public school systems. Bessie Locke, the founder of the National Kindergarten Association

in 1909, was instrumental in promoting the kindergarten and bringing it into the educational mainstream (Ladd, 1982).

Lazerson (1971) describes the changes in the kindergarten movement that resulted from this transition. Firstly, the parent education component of kindergartens was virtually eliminated. As half day programs were considered too expensive, kindergarten teachers were expected to run programs in both mornings and afternoons, leaving no time for home visiting. Grubb (1987) quotes an early childhood educator lamenting the change in kindergartens resulting from its incorporation into the school system:

> In order to survive...we could not tell of the work we were doing with families....we must try to prove ...that the children who had attended kindergarten could progress so much faster in the first grade. Consequently, we lost our splendid birthright of family welfare work...and we began to work for very elementary forms of the three R;s.

The transition of the kindergarten into the public schools impacted the curriculum as well. Kindergarten classes became larger, necessitating regimented procedures and techniques of control (Spodek and Robinson, 1965). The play based curriculum gave way, in many kindergartens, to workbooks and manuals, that would supposedly better prepare children for school. Much was lost of the flexibility, individuality, and variety that typified the kindergartens in the 1920's[1].

[1] While the incorporation of the kindergarten into the school system resulted in changes that were not all positive, there is another side to that issue. Primary education was influenced by the kindergarten philosophy and pedagogy (Ross, 1976). The fact that many primary schools became more "child oriented" , is seen as a direct influence of the kindergarten movement (Vandewalker, 1971).

The legacy of the kindergarten movement.

The kindergarten provides us with an example of a provision that succeeded in becoming almost universal. Almost all 5 year old American children today are in kindergartens (Rudolph and Cohen, 1984). This can be attributed partly to the fact that the underlying philosophy was consistent with pervading societal values. Unlike the day nurseries or the infant schools, the kindergarten was never seen as competing with the family as the primary nurturer of children. In addition, the kindergarten movement changed and adapted with the times, incorporating new information from development theory. Perhaps most importantly, the kindergarten became firmly established in the school system, which provided it with secure financial backing. An important legacy left by the kindergarten movement has to do with the professionalism of the people that cared for children. The early kindergarteners established training institutes for teachers and laid the foundations for early childhood education as an academic endeavour.

However, the legacy that the history of the kindergarten has left is not without problems. While their inclusion as part of the school system has ensured funding, many educators (Elkind, 1987) have expressed concern over the lack of emphasis on play and the overemphasis on

academic performance. Finally, incorporation of the kindergartens in the public school systems resulted in the disappearance of a family centered approach to children's education. In spite of the considerable weight given to parent education in the early stages of development, the evolution of the kindergarten virtually excluded any consideration of the parents. The nursery school, to be discussed in the next section, perhaps because it did not become part of the school system, was able to maintain a unique play-based program with a parent involvement component that in some ways was similar to the original kindertarten idea.

THE NURSERY SCHOOL

The original nursery school in America was similar to a day nursery . What differentiated the two provisions was the attention given to the educational program for the children. Similarly to kindergartens, the nursery school movement developed a pedagogy for children, based on the current theories of child development. However, nursery schools did not share the spiritual trappings of the Frobellian kindergartens. The major impetus for their development originated in academic child studies centers, starting in the 1920's. Nursery schools became largely a self funded service for children of the middle classes. A major legacy of the nursery schools is the heightened awareness of the import nce of the study of early childhood, and the development of academic centers where such study is carried out. While the lack of public support for nursery schools has resulted in limited accessibility, it has allowed the development of a unique educational service .

The first nursery schools

The concept of the nursery school is credited to the McMillan sisters, of London (Seefeldt & Barbour, 1990). Concerned with the effect of slum life on the physical and mental health of children, Rachel McMillan started the Open Air Nursery School in 1911. A primary focus was on the prevention of illness through proper nutrition, fresh air

and a sanitary environment (McMillan, 1929). While sharing much common ground with the early kindergartens and day nurseries, the early nursery schools emphasised the combination of love, nurture and physical care with learning. The nursery school class provided a

> "child-size world, where young children could learn to undertake everyday domestic activities, have full scope for imaginative play and experiment, while learning motor control and developing their five senses under skilled guidance in a physically healthy environment... a homely environment...for informal learning as in a lively middle-class household" (Whitbread, 1972).

The McMillan sisters' influence was brought to the United States by Abigail Eliot, a trained social worker who studied with MacMillan in 1921. Eliot is credited with turning the Ruggles Street Day Nursery, a bleak group care program "with no educational program at all" (Braun & Edwards, 1972) into a nursery school. The nursery school maintained the health routines of the day nursery, borrowed curricular ideas from the kindergarten, and allowed the children to pursue activities of their choice with little direction from the teacher (Report of the Ruggles Street Nursery School and Training Center, 1924).

The development of nursery schools in the United States.

Nursery schools had a slow beginning in the United States, with their main impetus coming from colleges for child studies. In essence, their establishment can be seen as a by-product of the kindergarten movement. Kindergartens

developed outside of universities, with some of the leaders of the movement subsequently gaining entry into the academic world, thereafter establishing nursery schools at universities. For example, Patty Hill Smith, herself a leader in the kindergarten field, started a nursery at Columbia University Teachers College. Of the few nursery schools that were in operation by the mid 1920's in the United States, most were supported by colleges for child study (Seedfeldt & Barbour, 1990).

Gordon and Browne (1985) trace the development of nine nursery-schools that served as child development laboratories between the years 1919 and 1927. Amongst these were the Merrill-Palmer Institute Nursery School, and the Smith College Nursery School. Particularly noteworthy was the Bureau of Educational Experiments, which later became the Bank Street College of Education, one of the most highly acclaimed sources of research and training in early childhood education. These and other laboratory schools were active in expanding knowledge about the early stages of childhood, and most of these centers included a parent education component. However, some nursery schools were established not under university auspices. Read & Patterson (1980) quote a 1931 survey of 203 nursery schools in the United States. While most were university sponsored, about one third were privately controlled and about one fifth were sponsored by child welfare agencies. Parent cooperative nurseries, the first of which was developed in 1915 by

university wives, became popular at several universities, and by 1930 there were 262 parent cooperative nursery schools (Braun & Edwards, 1972). In the 1950's parent cooperative nursery schools flourished. These nurseries were staffed by a trained teacher assisted by parent aids, and combined the program for the children with "parent initiated" parent education (Read and Patterson, 1980).

Nursery schools enjoyed public auspices during the depression years. The Works Project Administration provided teachers, social workers, and other unemployed professionals with short courses at universities and colleges, as well as with inservice training programs, to prepare them to work in nursery schools set-up for needy children. By 1942 WPA nursery schools were provided for 37,000 children in the United states. However, the hope that nursery schools would become stabalized as a permanent institution with public funding ceased when the WPA funding was withdrawn in 1943.

World War Two saw a second major impetus for nursery school education, based on the provision called the Lanham Act. This provided funds for mothers who worked in the war industries. At this time nursery school education merged with day care. Leaders in nursery school education established full day care programs, which combined the care aspect of the day nurseries with the educational program of nursery schools. However, like the WPA nursery school, most of the programs that were set up during the war were discontinued upon the termination of federal funds at the

end of the war.

Nursery schools have developed by and large through private funding. A 1971 survey indicated that while over a million children were enrolled in nursery schools, only 35% of these were in publicly funded programs (Evans, 1974). The low staff-child ratio that is typical of nursery schools makes them too costly to become part of the school system (Greenblatt, 1977). To this day nursery schools continue to operate under a variety of auspices: on the campuses of colleges and universities, in churches, homes, shopping centers, and civic buildings (Evans, 1974).

Whereas the kindergarten movement, by virtue of its entry into the school system, developed fairly standard criteria for teacher education, nursery schools did not. Some nurseries require professional credentials while others do not. Similarly, the age of the children, the length of the program, and the degree of parent involvement varies considerably from program to program. However, the "many thousands" of nursery programs " generally have a common theme" (Evans,1974), which reflects their connection with the child study movement. The next section discusses the theoretical influences and practical pedagogy of nursery schools.

Theoretical foundations and pedagogy of the nursery school.

"Mental hygiene" and "play" are probably the two phrases that best reflect the theoretical underpinnings of

the nursery school movement. Lawrence Frank, a leader in the child development movement which began in the 1920's, viewed the nursery school as a prime agency for mental health (Weber, 1984) In his lectures to nursery school teachers, Frank attempted to apply psychoanalytic theory to the nursery school room. Guidelines for the handling of toilet routines, controlling emotions, dealing with fears and grief were amongst the topics discussed. Applied psychoanalytic theory meant providing the "security of stable situations, the support of endless patience and tolerance, and, above all, the strenth given by dependable human relations" (Weber, 1984). No repressive policies were to be used in the nursery schools, nor could affection be withdrawn as a means of control.

While Piaget's theory is widely acknowledged today by early childhood educators as crucial to understanding how children learn, the leaders of the nursery school movement tended to be sceptical of his research, considering it "slightly interesting and mildly irrelevant" (Greenberg, 1987).

Greenberg summarizes the key concepts in nursery school pedagogy in the 1940's and 50'. These became "au courant" , through the initative of a number of John Dewey's woman students. Play was the primary activity in nursery schools, and phrases such as "a good play environment", "free play", dramatic play", "solitary play", etc., became the catch phrases of the nursery school. Children were thought to

learn most effectively through play. Learning through planning, doing, thinking and discussing was considered the most natural and effective way for young children to grow into good pupils who love learning. The teacher's role was to prepare the learning environment, act as a child guidance specialist and parent relations person (Greenberg, 1987). Essential to the pedagogy of the nursery school is the empahsis on the warm, supporting relationship between the child and staff member (Read & Patterson,1980; Evans,1974), which is facilitated by relatively low staff-child ratios.

Lessons learnt from the nursery schools.

While the nursery schools have not received the public funding required to become a universal service, their influence in the realm of preschool education has outweighed their contributions in terms of the provision of services. As summarized by Grubb (1987), "even though nursery schools were not widespread, they provided a strong institutional image of what early childhood programs should represent, as well as an origin for contemporary early childhood education". The nursery school movement should be credited for providing a model of staff training which combines child development theory and methods of observing children, with the practical aspect of working with children. Many of the college and university training programs for early childhood teachers are based on this model. Much of the literature for the training of personnel for early childhood programs,

and indeed many of the faculty in universities and colleges which train early childhood staff have their roots in the child development and nursery school movement. The child care and early education model currently seen in well-thought-of employer-sponsored programs, the best of the child care chains and church regulated schools, and the developmentally appropriate programs for young children, are based on the nursery school model (Greenberg, 1987). It might also be noted that the the National Association for the Education of Young Children, an organization that is probably the most influential today in the field of early childhood education, had its roots in the National Committee on Nursery Schools, which was founded in the 1920's by Patty Hill Smith.

The nursery schools have come under criticism since the 1960's as inappropriate for disadvantaged children. The fact is that much of the developmental theory on which the nursery schools were based was formulated by researchers who observed middle class children. The Head Start programs, to be discussed in the next section, strayed from the traditional nursery school curriculum, by adding more structured learning experiences . However, the recognition of the fundamental importance of ensuring the healthy emotional-social development of children, which is the foundation of most current programs, stemmed from the nursery school.

THE HEAD START MOVEMENT

The origins of Head Start are attributed to a convergence of a new era in developmental psychology with the political needs and purposes of the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations' anti-poverty program (Steiner,1976). Head Start has now been in operation for two and a half decades. It has generated a variety of models of preschool curricula, models for comprehensive services to children and family, and has generated much research and policy debate. Although its original purpose to serve children of poor families has not altered, much of the information generated from Head Start programs has had an impact on the field of early childhood education. Head Start represents the single largest federal investment in services to preschool aged children. This review of the Head Start movement will highlight the historical background of Head Start, the goals of the program, its methods of implementation, and the impact of evaluative research on its development.

Theoretical background and origins of Head Start

The Head Start movement was spurred by a shift in child development theory brought to attention largely by J. McVicker Hunt and Benjamin Bloom. Hunt is credited with being instrumental in shifting the focus away from a belief in fixed intelligence and a predetermined development of children (the prevalent belief of the kindergarten and

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nursery school) to a belief in the major importance of environmental factors as determinants of children's intelligence. He propagated the idea of early enrichment in the preschool years as a method of ameliorating the "typical handicaps of ...lower class rearing by the time (the child) enters grade school" (Hunt, 1961). Benjamin Bloom's oft quoted book, Stability and Change in Human Characteristics (1964) popularized the notion that it is the early years that are crucial to the development of IQ, and that variations in IQ that occur after the age of four tend to be minimal. That is, if education can have an impact on the IQ's of children, it must begin in the preschool years.

Steiner (1976) summarizes the impact of Bloom and Hunt as demonstrating that existing policy did not adequately meet society's responsibility to children. If children pass through their most important period of development before they ever become part of the educational system, then preschool developmental services should be a compelling public obligation.

Coinciding with the above mentioned findings in child development research, there was an upheaval in educational services. The Russian breakthrough, demonstrated in the launching of the "Sputnik", led to a serious questioning of American education. At the same time, the civil rights struggle brought to public attention the plight of the poor. Johnson's war on poverty provided the social climate that was ripe for the investment of federal funds into the

development of comprehensive preschool services for disadvantaged children. Head Start became a pet American project which would, through early childhood programs, ameliorate the educational disadvantage of poverty.

Head Start originated in 1965 as a summer program for children aged four and five, whose socioeconomic status predicted school failure (Gordon & Browne, 1989). The beginnings of Head Start were "highly idiosyncratic" (Slaughter, 1982). Funds were made available to cities, school districts, community agencies, and existing local child care facilities, provided that the following basic stipulations were met: a) that the consumers be from poverty families b) that the curriculum contain an educational component (which was not defined in the guidelines and thus open to interpretation) and that c) some form of evaluation (also very loosely defined) be carried out (Slaughter, 1982).

After the first summer of operation Head Start Programs expanded to a full academic year prior to school entry. A variety of programs began to operate, varying in the breadth scope,and in the nature of the educational program (Evans, 1974).

The goals and principles of Head Start

While the curricula of early Head Start programs tended to be eclectic (Slaughter, 1982) they are said to have been

guided by objectives and principles established by national committees. These objectives were the physical health of the child, the promotion of the emotional and social development of the child . A further objective was to develop conceptual and verbal skills, and to increase the sense of dignity and self worth of the children and their families (Evans, 1974). These goals are not unlike those of the nursery school, which is not suprising. Many of the "experts" on the original organizing panels of Head Start programs were leaders in nursery school education, noteably, James Hymes Jr.

One of the unique features of the Head Start programs was the nature of community and parent involvement. Kindergartens and nursery schools had a parent education component, but the Head start programs involved the parents in a very different way. Through participation in administrative advisory boards, as teacher's aides, or through parent programs, a multifaceted approach was developed to actively involve the parents in the program, not just "to teach them". According to Haskins (1989) 70% of the staff of Head Start programs come from low income families similar to those from which its children come. Thus, Head Start, unlike all the other services discussed so far, was not only a program for the poor, but largely run by the poor (Haskins, 1989). The uniqueness of the "grass roots" involvement from board members to staff and parents

has been extensively noted (Travers & Light, 1982; Slaughter, 1982; Condry, 1983).

Head Start pedagogy

Evans (1974) categorizes the variety of programs developed in Head Start, which attempt to put different theories of development and learning into practice. . Some were based on behavioural principles, aimed at increasing the skill level of children in areas such as language and arithmetic. Other programs were organized to facilitate broad, general cognitive development, with less stringent academic objectives and more child-initiated activities. The third kind of program was geared toward "self actualization", and operated quite like the traditional nursery school.

The impact of the development of model programs for Head Start has been major. First, implicit in this work is the recognition that there is no one "best" way to educate all children. Indeed, evaluations of different curriculum models suggest that having a well designed educational plan is a more important determinant of success than the nature of the plan (Weikart,1982). Secondly, these model programs left a legacy of ideas for curricula, program evaluation and staff training models for early childhood professionals today (Day & Parker, 1977). Thirdly, the development of model preschool programs lead to a "cross fertilization" between the fields of social science and education (Day &

Parker, 1977). Finally, the accumulation of descriptive and evaluative data from model programs has provided information about factors which ensure that a model is implemented successfully. Among these are: adequate facilities and resource materials; stable and well-organized staff models, staff satisfaction and belief in the value of the model content (Evans, 1974).

Evaluative research of Head Start and its impact on policy.

The evaluation of Head Start that is most widely known is the Westinghouse Report, designed to "provide the quickest possible statement of average long term effects of Head Start" (Westinghouse Learning Corp, 1969). The Westinghouse study sampled 225 Head Start centers and compared Head Start "graduates" with children who were not in Head Start programs, in a series of cognitive and affective tests. The Westinghouse study has been repeatedly criticised for its research design, and for its "short sightedness" of focus in identifying the "gains" (Brown, 1985; Condry, 1983). The study concluded that the Summer Head Start program was totally ineffective, and the full year programs only very marginally effective.

In spite of the major criticisms of the Westinghouse study, it was to have a marked influence on future policy. Summer programs were virtually eliminated, and a three year plan was devised to phase out Head Start. The plan was averted, largely due to grass roots pressure lead by Head

Start parents and staff (Travers & Light,1982; Brown, 1985). As summarized by Brown, "the impact of the Westinghouse report was devastating. Morale was shattered, and good staff left the program. .....the program budget was held constant for many years....".

In retrospect, however, one may view the Westinghouse report in a more positive light. The euphoric and somewhat naive belief in the magic of any early childhood program as an antidote for poverty was indeed shaken. The onus was on those who still believed in the value of early childhood education to prove what could realistically be achieved, and how. Under the leadership of Edward Zigler, the Director of the Office of Child Development, a series of experimental Head Start programs was launched. As mentioned previously, model programs were developed, as were performance standards and staff training programs. Researchers had to develop comprehensive and valid experimental designs to assess the benefits of programs to children, families, and communities. A Consortium was set up in 1975 which included many of the leaders in child development research. They were to study the impact of well run early intervention programs, "to provide a general assessment of the long-term effectiveness of early education across different programs (Condry,1983). While most of the programs studies were not Head Start programs, but University based, they were to provide an example of what Head Start "could be" .

The Consortium for Longitudinal Studies (1979) found, basically, that high quality infant and preschool services improve the ability of low income children to meet the minimal requirements of further schooling. Participating children are less likely to be assigned to special education classes or to repeat grades than their peers who did not participate. The IQ and school achievement of low income children through the critical early primary years was improved in participating children, and they were more likely to give achievement-related reasons for being proud of themselves. In addition the mothers of children in the study had higher vocational aspirations for their children. In addition to these findings, some of the programs in the consortium study were able to demonstrate positive findings regarding a decrease in teen pregnancies, more teen mothers returning to school, less crime, and less unemployment amongst the graduates of their programs (Berrulta-Clement et al., 1984).

The impact of the Consortium research on policy was reported to be considerable. Head Start's budget was increased by 150 million dollars in 1977 (the first money for program expansion in a decade). Plans to increase Head Start in spite of social service cuts were announced by President Reagan in 1981. While, as pointed out by Brown (1985) the research findings alone could not have changed policy, it did provide the politicians who wanted Head Start with the evidence they required to "move ahead". The

findings also had a "stunning impact" (Brown, 1985) on early childhood workers, who "after 10 years of criticism, felt their life's work vindicated."

However, the work of the consortium left one serious question unanswered. The intervention programs evaluated were conducted under ideal circumstances: with large budgets, top researchers, and highly qualified staff. How likely is it that the results of the consortium study would be transferable to the local head start programs?

In 1985 a government sponsored evaluation project of Head Start called the Head Start Evaluation Synthesis and Utilization Project (McKey et al, 1985) set out to address this question. The study combined the results of 210 evaluative studies of Head Start programs including very few university-based model programs. The findings, not surprisingly, were not as exciting as those of the consortium. The main findings stressed the short term positive effects on cognitive and socio-emotional test scores, but failed to find lasting effects. Furthermore, minimal positive effects with regard to grade retention and/or special education classes were reported. However, the study did note the positive effect that Head Start had on educational, economic, health care and social services, and on staff and parents (McKey et al,1985). Head Start children were more likely to get medical examinations, dental evaluation, nutrition evaluations, and vision and hearing screenings. They were also more likely to have

healthier diets than non Head Start children (Haskins, 1989).

The Synthesis project has undergone much critisicm from researchers (particularly from those who were involved in the Consortium study) (Schweinhart & Weinkart, 1986). The sampling techniques, and the inclusion of low quality research design studies in the meta-analysis are amongst the criticisms (Schweinhart & Weikart, 1986). It seems that the findings can be likened to the half-empty bottle syndrome. Supporters of Head Start can use the report to justify the continued development of Head Start. However, the findings are not dramatic enough to convince "non believers" that Head Start would produce financially meaningful returns (Haskins, 1989).

It is probably fair to say that the Head Start research has indicated that high quality, heavily funded programs yield quite impressive results, and that most Head Start programs demonstrate some positive effects. However, the emphasis of evaluation of long term effects has recently been questioned (Haskins, 1989; Schweinhart & Weikart, 1986). It is argued that participation in preschool should be accessible to all children, rich or poor. Head start has made such programs available to one out of three low-income children in the United States today.

The impact of Head Start

Summaries of the research on the impact of Head Start present perhaps too narrow a view of the contribution that Head Start has made. Indirectly, Head Start has had much broader effects on the care and education of young children. The involvement of familes and communities at large in preschool programs is probably one of the most important lessons from Head Start. Without the grass roots pressure from participants on the government, Head Start would likely have been phased out some time ago. Head Start gave impetus to the development of a variety of program models to serve children and families. A variety of preschool curricula were developed for Head Start.

As a result of the research efforts concerning Head Start, preschool education became an important focus for academic attention, and research questions, methodolgy and evaluative procedures were devised and tested. Training programs were developed for staff in early childhood programs. A national program for staff training, the CDA, which was originally devised for Head Start staff, became a national program for staff training and qualification in a variety of early childhood settings. Head Start provided a model of successful collaboration between the field of child development and the construction of social policy, and provided a demonstration of how a program can be influenced by research findings and fluctuations in the social-political climate (Valentine and Zigler, 1983).

Head start is not a universal service, it serves only (but not all) poor children. However, it has demonstrated that a large investment of federal dollars can provide children and families with a widespread service that is flexible and probably more sensitive to individual and community needs than other programs that have been reviewed in this paper.

CONCLUSION

This review of the evolution of care and education services for preschool children has presented in isolation the development of the infant schools, the day nurseries, the kindergarten, the nursery-school and Head Start. While this has provided the opportunity to highlight the unique history and contribution of each, it is also somewhat misleading. Many of the key people were influential in more than one framework. Furthermore, many of the key ideas overlapped. The entry of nursery school teachers into the day nursery arena during the depression years and during World War Two is well documented (Dratch, 1974; Greenblatt, 1977). Leaders in the nursery school movement were instrumental in establishing Head Start, and the nursery school may have been an offshoot of the kindergarten movement, encouraged by leaders such as Patty Hill Smith.

There is a growing trend to emphasise the common goals of all provisions for preschool aged children, and thus to minimize the differences between the various kinds of provision. Indeed, it could be argued that the needs of children for care and education are similar, regardless of whether they are in a nursery school, day care, or a Head Start program. While the merging of these streams may ease the formulation of social policy, it is worthwhile giving due consideration to the contributions of each kind of provision, and to inquire whether this uniqueness will be, or should be preserved.

History cannot provide the answers to present policy questions. It would be simplistic to suggest that the "lessons" from history can be directly applied to the present. However, the history can provide food for thought to those involved in current policy debate. For example, with regard to the funding of early childhood programs, policy makers might bear in mind that without public funding, quality early childhood programs have been the privilege of the middle class. Programs funded exclusively for the poor have been subject to the changing priorities of governments. Furthermore, the Head Start experience demonstrated that sparsely funded programs cannot live up to expectations of compensatory education or social reform.

The auspices of early childhood programs is a difficult question presently receiving much attention (Mitchell & Modigliani, 1989; Morado, 1986; Morgan,

1983;1989; Kagan, 1989a,b). The history of the infant schools and the kindergarten movement suggests that absorption of early childhood programs into the public school system may put at risk the unique emphasis on play and parent involvement that have become the sine qua non of quality early childhood programs. The social welfare auspices of the day nurseries was associated with a lack of concern with trained staff and with developmentally appropriate programs . Yet, the social work influence may have led to a heightened awareness of the needs for emotional and social support to families. Perhaps the key to quality programs lies less in the specific agency that sponsors programs, and more in the collaboration that is established between experts in early childhood education, parents, and the agencies involved.

The review of the day nurseries, kindergartens, nursery schools and head start reveals substantial differences in the nature and degree of staff training required. To date there is little evidence available to indicate which kind of training is most effective. Furthermore, there is no research available on the "transferability" of one specific kind of training within the various provisions. Staff training programs set up by Head Start were "skills oriented" rather than theoretically based. The experience of the infant schools suggest that teachers may require a theoretical understanding to prevent indiscriminate application of curriculum ideas. The kindergarten teachers,

through their association with the school system, are the only group to have formalized academic training requirements. This has provided them with more professional status than their peers in the other early childhood services.

With regard to the appropriate curriculum for preschool children, it was seen that much of the practice of the traditional nursery school has been accepted as "developmentally appropriate " practice. However, the research generated by Head Start has raised questions as to whether the play based curriculum is appropriate for all children. In fact, well run programs of different theoretical and pedagogical orientations seem to be equally effective, and a choice of program should be a matter of values and theoretical orientation rather than being based on a promise of effectiveness.

Finally, with regard to the degree of public funding that should be devoted to early childhood services, a final observation might be noted. Early childhood programs are expensive. They cannot, to date, promise wide social reform, or even astounding long term benefits to the chidren. Head Start did, however, demonstrate that early childhood programs, when sufficiently funded, do have positive "ripple effects" on children, parents, and communities at large.

With the exception of the day nurseries, all the programs reviewed in this paper were based on a belief that childhood

is a unique and important period of human life, and that society had an obligation to protect children and foster their growth and development. Whether to ensure a brighter future, or simply to enrich the present, children were considered, by the proponents of all programs " to be worth the investment." Behind many of the complex issues facing policy makers today lies the question of how much should be invested in today's children.

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